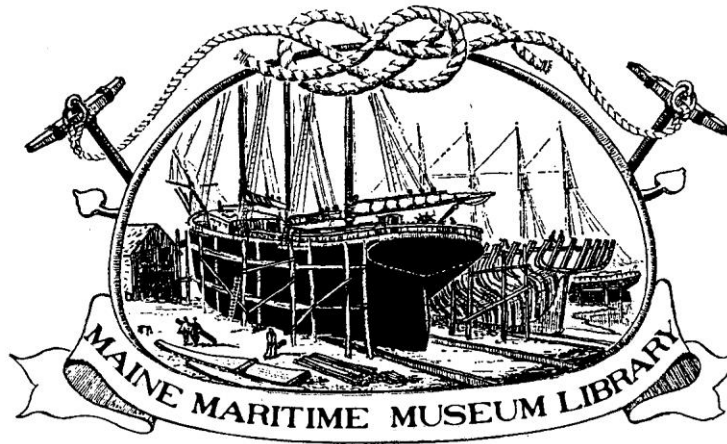


**Maine Maritime Museum Library**

243 Washington Street  
Bath, Maine 04530-1638  
(207) 443-1316, ext. 328, 336



**Inventory for  
Manuscript Collection  
MS - 36**

**William A. Fairburn Papers**

**1815-1957  
Bulk: 1893-1957**

by  
Elisabeth Meier  
December 2018

7 ½ boxes and 2 oversize boxes  
5 linear feet  
*Accession no. 77.136*

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## Abstract

### **Fairburn, William Armstrong (1876-1947)**

#### **Papers, 1815-1957**

Bulk dates: 1893-1957

7 ½ boxes and 2 oversize boxes

Naval architect, industrialist, maritime historian and author

This collection contains letters, notes, ephemera, and drafts written or collected by William A. Fairburn, a naval architect, industrialist, and author who started his career in Bath, Maine. There is some material from his education and early career at Bath Iron Works and the Eastern Shipbuilding Company. However, the bulk of the collection consists of drafts and research material collected for his book, *Merchant Sail*, and treatises on political theory. There is little to no personal material in the collection.

Gift of Robert Fairburn.

MS-036. Accession #77.136.

Finding aid (folder level control) in repository.

#### **Added entries—persons:**

Fairburn, William Armstrong (1876-1947)

Ritchie, Ethel M.

#### **Added entries—corporate bodies (including vessels):**

Arthur Sewall & Co.

Bath Iron Works

*Dakota* (screw steamer)

Eastern Shipbuilding Company

*Erskine M. Phelps* (ship)

Fairburn Marine Educational Foundation, Inc.

*Minnesota* (screw steamer)

#### **Added entries—key terms:**

Intellectual life – History

Maritime history

Naval architects

Naval architecture – Designs and plans

Shipbuilding

Ships – Iron and steel

## Acquisition

This collection was donated to the museum by William A. Fairburn's son, Robert Fairburn, in 1977.

## Restrictions

There are no restrictions on this collection.

### **Physical Condition**

The papers are mostly in good condition. The pins in the manuscripts for *Merchant Sail* do not show any signs of rust (as of 2018), but should be monitored for continued stability.

### **Processing Notes**

The papers appear to have been organized, at least minimally, before they arrived at the museum. Some items were removed from scrapbooks; other letters were clipped so that only the letterhead and signature were saved. This processing may have been done by Ethel M. Ritchie, Fairburn's editor, or another family member.

The collection contains a number of manuscripts and typescripts for Fairburn's various publications. Those for *Merchant Sail* have been organized, where possible, by volume. Where manuscript sheets were arranged by Ethel M. Ritchie, that order has not been altered. As there was no identifying information on the manuscripts for Fairburn's various political and economic texts, these have been organized loosely by subject.

This collection arrived with many final, or near-final, bound and un-bound printers' proofs of *Merchant Sail*, including dozens of copies of some signature folios. Two of each identical signature, and one of each identical preliminary printed volume, have been kept with the collection, and the remainder discarded. A complete bound "desk copy" of *Merchant Sail*, with some additions and corrections, has been cataloged in the book stacks.

Paperclips and other fasteners have been removed where possible and the groupings that they indicated maintained by acid-free paper, mylar sheets, or other dividers. However, the manuscript drafts of *Merchant Sail* consist of many small sheets pinned together, and removing the pins would remove the logic of the draft. These pins therefore remain.

### **Related Materials**

This collection came with a large number of plans from vessels that Fairburn worked on at Bath Iron Works and the Eastern Shipbuilding Corporation. These are filed in the plans collection according to the vessel they represent. Please consult museum staff for more information. Photostats and other out-of-scale plans are still in this collection.

Additionally, there is some correspondence between Ethel M. Ritchie and Paul Eaton about reviewing and distributing *Merchant Sail* in MS-631.

### **Historical Note**

William A. Fairburn was born in Huddersfield, England, in 1876. He and his family left England for Bath, Maine, circa 1890, where his father, Thomas, found a job at Bath Iron Works. After graduating from high school in Bath, William also joined the Iron Works as an apprentice draftsman. In 1896, he enrolled in the naval architecture course at the University of Glasgow, completed two years of coursework in a single year, and graduated at the top of his class. Fairburn then returned to Bath Iron Works as a draftsman and naval architect. He also designed steel sailing ships for Arthur Sewall & Co. on the side.

In 1900, Fairburn left Bath for the Eastern Shipbuilding Co. of New London, Connecticut, which had just contracted to build the *Minnesota* (screw steamer) and *Dakota* (screw steamer), the two largest ships ever constructed in America at the time. Fairburn was a

leading naval architect on the project. After the two ships were launched, Fairburn went on to be an independent consultant for a number of major steel shipyards and steamship lines, including William Cramp & Sons of Philadelphia and the Southern Pacific Co.

In the same decade, Fairburn started experimenting with chemistry. In 1909, he began working for the Diamond Match Company to produce a match that was not poisonous. He patented his solution in 1913, and by 1915 was serving as president of the company. He held that position for the remainder of his career.

William A. Fairburn married Louise Ramsay in 1904. They had two sons: William (1910-1966) and Robert (1912-1976). The family moved frequently to accommodate Fairburn's career, then settled in Morristown, New Jersey, once Fairburn was established at the Diamond Match Company. They also maintained a summer retreat on Lake Kezar in Center Lovell, Maine, and a winter home in Ojai, California.

In addition to being a naval engineer, chemist, and executive, Fairburn was also a prolific and polymathic writer. As a young naval architect, he published several articles for the leading periodicals in marine engineering on both sides of the Atlantic. As a corporate executive in the nineteen-teens and twenties, he focused on practical and philosophical issues of government, labor, and ethics, producing volumes with titles like *The Individual and Society* (1915), *Justice and Law* (1927), and *Russia: The Utopia in Chains* (1931). Fairburn's last, and most lasting, publication was *Merchant Sail*, a six-volume work that describes the development of the American merchant marine. *Merchant Sail* was compiled and published with the help of Fairburn's secretary and editor, Ethel M. Ritchie, who saw the final three volumes to completion after Fairburn died in 1947.

### Scope and Content Note

This collection contains some personal material, ship plans and notes, and an extensive group of manuscripts written by William A. Fairburn. There is material from his career as a naval architect and author, but nothing from his tenure at the Diamond Match Company.

Series I, Personal Papers, is fairly scanty. It chiefly consists of a few letters about Fairburn's career, professional honors, and some ephemera. Particularly notable for his time in Bath, there are a few letters from Arthur Sewall & Co. about designs for the new steel ships *Erskine M. Phelps* and *Arthur Sewall*. An application for a Chief Engineer's License, which Fairburn filled out in 1906, gives a detailed description of his career to that date. There are also a few remnants of his education and work as a naval architect, mostly concerning the construction of the *Minnesota* and *Dakota* (screw steamers) in New London.

Series I also contains material collected by Fairburn for various purposes. There are a few manuscript documents related to Maine ships, reproduction plans for vessels he may have worked on at Bath Iron Works, and clippings related to his interests in naval architecture, maritime history, and government. The plans were numbered and grouped before they arrived at MMM: it is possible they were meant for inclusion in a book, but that association has been lost.

The bulk of the collection is in Series II, which contains drafts for Fairburn's many printed works. These are in varying stages of completion, from rough notes to printer's proofs. There are final printed editions of several of Fairburn's articles on naval engineering. Material on political science is in draft form, from clipped notes to typescript chapters. There are no clear links to any of his final printed works, though the collection appears to hold material that later appeared in *Loyalty: an Ideal, a Philosophy, a Religion* (1926) and *Justice and Law* (1927).

Drafts for *Merchant Sail* spans all stages of the writing and publication process, though manuscript drafts only survive for volumes 1 and 2. Finally, there are several lengthy indexes of photographs, by type of ship and by page, for an unidentified work on maritime matters.

## Box and Folder List

### Ia. Personal Papers

| Box | Folder |   |
|-----|--------|---|
| 1   | 1      | Correspondence, 1893-1907   |
|     | 2      | Correspondence—letterheads and signatures 1896-1903 and undated   |
|     |        | Shipbuilding:   |
|     | 3      | Glossary of shipbuilding terms, compiled by W.A. Fairburn   |
|     | 4      | Speed trials, <i>Sagamore</i> (steam yacht), 1898   |
|     | 5      | Construction agreement, Eastern Shipbuilding Co., for the <i>Minnesota</i> (screw steamer) and <i>Dakota</i> (screw steamer) (copy), 1900 |
|     | 6      | Notebook, specifications, <i>Minnesota</i> and <i>Dakota</i>  |
|     | 7      | Construction notes and calculations, <i>Minnesota</i> and <i>Dakota</i>   |
|     | 8      | Notes and calculations, unidentified vessels  |
|     | 9      | Application for Chief Engineer's License, 1906  |
|     | 10     | Map of Waterfront Property and Ship Yard Plant owned by Hugh Ramsay, Perth Amboy, NJ  |
|     | 11     | Ephemera, W.A. Fairburn (some material in oversize box 9)   |

### Ib. Material collected by W.A. Fairburn

|   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | 12 | Manuscripts collected by W.A. Fairburn (1 folder):<br><i>Henry B. Cleaves</i> (brig)<br><i>Arizona</i> (schooner), bill of lading<br><i>Benjamin Sewall</i> (ship), bills of sale<br>Bank note, Shipbuilders Bank, Rockland Maine<br>Seaman's Protection Certificate, William Dean, Thomaston, Maine |
|   |    | Reproduction plans collected by W.A. Fairburn, arranged by his numbers:  |
|   | 13 | #902-3: US Gunboats Nos. 10-13 (BIW hulls #15-16, <i>Vicksburg</i> (PG-11) and <i>Newport</i> (PG-12))   |
|   | 14 | #904-7: US Naval Academy Training Ship <i>USS Chesapeake</i> (BIW hull #26)  |
|   | 15 | #908-913: <i>Arkansas</i> (monitor : BM-7) and class (BIW hull #31, <i>Nevada</i> (BM-8))  |
|   | 16 | #914: 157 Ton Torpedo Boat, Bidder's Design (likely BIW hulls #28-30)  |
|   | 17 | #918-19: <i>City of Lowell</i> (screw steamer) (BIW hull #8)   |
|   | 18 | #920: Speed curves, unidentified vessel  |
|   | 19 | #929-31, 933-942: <i>Minnesota</i> (screw steamer) and <i>Dakota</i> (screw steamer) (Eastern Shipbuilding Co. hulls #1-2)   |
|   | 20 | Duplicate plans, <i>Minnesota</i> and <i>Dakota</i>  |
|   | 21 | #944-6, 948: Single Screw Cargo Steamer  |
|   | 22 | #959-962: Torpedo boats <i>Bagley</i> (TB-24), <i>Barney</i> (TB-25), and <i>Biddle</i> (TB-26) (BIW hulls #28-30)   |
| 2 | 1  | #963-967: US Sheathed Protected Cruisers #14-16 ( <i>Denver</i> -class)  |
|   | 2  | #968-969: Battleships <i>Virginia</i> (BB-13) and <i>Rhode Island</i> (BB-17)  |
|   | 3  | #971: Lightship #68  |

4 #1064-5, 1076-77: Three unidentified schooners and *Dirigo* (ship)

Clippings collected by W.A. Fairburn on the following topics:

- 5 W.A. Fairburn, life and career
- 6 *Minnesota* (screw steamer) and *Dakota* (screw steamer)
- 7 Images, *Katahdin* (ram)
- 8 Images, BIW vessels: *Machias* (gunboat : PG-5) and *Sagamore*  
(barkentine, yacht)
- 9 Images, sailing vessels
- 10 Images, steam ships (some material in oversize box 9)
- 11 Images, engines and boilers
- 12 Statistics, naval and merchant marine engineering
- 13 Maritime history
- 14 Democracy and militarism
- 15 Militarism
- 16 Miscellaneous

## II. Manuscripts and Publications

### Marine Engineering

- 2 17 “Steam Yacht *Wacouta*.” Reprinted from the *Journal of the American Society of Naval Engineers* XIV no. 4
- 18 “Methods of Handling Material over Shipbuilding Berths in American Shipyards.” London: Institution of Naval Architects, 1902.
- 19 “Launching of Large Merchant Vessels.” Read at the eleventh general meeting of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, New York, NY, November 1903.
- 20 “Fitting-Out Wharf Crane Service in American Shipyards.” Read at the Spring Meeting of the Institution of Naval Architects, 1903.
- 21 “Dispositions Interessantes dans le Trace des Plus Grandes Navires a Vapeur.” Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1903.
- 22 “The Great Schooners of Long Island.” N.p., n.d.

### Government, Economics, and Society

#### Manuscripts:

- 2 23 Society and economics
- 24 Napoleon and Oliver Cromwell

#### Typescripts:

- 3 1 Ethics
- 2 Sincerity
- Loyalty
- 3 Examples from Roman history (12-14)
- 4 “Loyalty to the Ideal. To God.” (17)
- 5 “The Work of the World: Loyalty to One’s Work” (18)
- 6 “Loyalty and Chivalry” (21)
- 7 “Loyalty and Emotionalism” (22)



|    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 8  |   | “Loyalty and Self-Possession” (23)                            |
| 9  |   | “Loyalty to the Greater rather than the Lesser” (24)          |
| 10 |   | “Dog and Cat Types of Loyalty”                                |
| 11 |   | “Loyalty and Democracy”                                       |
| 12 |   | “Democracy and Loyalty”                                       |
| 13 |   | “Democracy, Militarism, and Loyalty”                          |
| 14 |   | Loyalty--Notes & Clippings (from envelope holding #17 and 18) |
| 15 |   | Loyalty--Notes & Clippings                                    |
| 16 |   | Loyalty--Notes & Clippings                                    |
| 17 |   | Loyalty--Notes & Clippings                                    |
| 18 |   | “Prohibition” (from <i>Justice and Law</i> , 1927)            |
| 19 |   | Democracy   |
| 20 |   | Democracy, Imperialism, Militarism, and Humanism              |
| 21 |   | Economics & Society   |
| 4  | 1 | Labor   |
|    | 2 | Socialism   |
|    | 3 | Capitalism and Bolshevism                                     |
|    | 4 | Bolshevism  |

### Merchant Sail

#### Manuscripts

##### Volume I:

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | 5 | Chapter 1.1: “America’s First Ship—The <i>Virginia</i> of Sagadahoc”  |
|   | 6 | Chapter 1.2-18: “The Memorable Year of 1607” – “The London and Plymouth Companies”                                      |
|   | 7 | Chapter 1.20-24: “The Pilgrim Colony” – “Spanish Expeditions”   |
|   | 8 | Chapter 1.31-36: “The Fisheries” – “Slave Trade during Colonial Times”  |
| 5 | 1 | Chapter 1.39, 42, 54, and 57: “Shipbuilding in New England,” “Ship Timbers,” “Casco Bay,” and Colonial Merchant Seamen” |
|   | 2 | Chapter 1, revisions and inserts  |
|   | 3 | Chapter 1, revisions and inserts  |
|   | 4 | Chapters 3-4, revisions and inserts   |
|   | 5 | Chapter 4, revisions and inserts  |

##### Volume 2:

|    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| 6  |  | Chapter 7, revisions and inserts                         |
| 7  |  | Chapter 8.1-5: “Early Fishing Settlements” – “Nantucket” |
| 8  |  | Chapter 10.4: “Superiority of Yankee Seamanship”         |
| 9  |  | Chapter 10.26: “Inauguration of Dramatic Line” [sic]     |
| 10 |  | Chapters 11-12, heavily revised drafts                   |
| 11 |  | Chapters 11-12, revisions and inserts                    |

#### Typescript

##### Volume 2

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | 1 | Chapter 8, “Deep-Sea Fisheries and Whaling,” p. 971-1019  |
|   | 2 | Chapter 8, “Deep-Sea Fisheries and Whaling,” p. 1020-1060 |

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|   | 3 | Chapter 9, "United States World Leadership in Sound and Economic Scientific Navigation," p. 1061-1072                  |
|   | 4 | Chapter 10, "The Sailing Packet Era," p. 1073-1105   |
|   | 5 | Chapter 10, "The Sailing Packet Era," p. 1106-1141   |
|   | 6 | Chapter 10, "The Sailing Packet Era," p. 1142-1193   |
|   | 7 | Chapter 10, "The Sailing Packet Era," p. 1194-1252   |
|   | 8 | Chapter 10, "The Sailing Packet Era," p. 1253-1310   |
| 7 | 1 | Chapter 11, "Deep Sea Steam Navigation," p. 1311-1365  |
|   | 2 | Chapter 11, "Deep Sea Steam Navigation," p. 1366-1417  |
|   | 3 | Chapter 12, "The Contribution of the United States toward the Practical Development of Steam Navigation," p. 1419-1459 |
|   | 4 | Chapter 12, "The Contribution of the United States toward the Practical Development of Steam Navigation," p. 1460-1493 |
|   | 5 | Chapter 13, "The Clipper Ship Era," p. 1495-1549   |
|   | 6 | Chapter 13, "The Clipper Ship Era," p. 1550-1584   |

Printer's Proofs (in box 10, oversize)

Volume 2

- (OS) Unbound signatures
- (OS) Corrected sheets
- (OS) Table of Contents, Volumes 1-3
- (OS) Insurance Copies, Volumes 1-5 (bound, with errors and corrections noted)

Miscellaneous

- |   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| 8 | 1    | Notes on maritime topics   |
|   | 2    | Manuscript lists of vessels, "Americana Marine"                            |
|   | 3    | Typescript "Types of Sailing Vessels," index to photographs                |
|   | 4    | Index to photographs, unidentified publication, bound                      |
|   | (OS) | Index to photographs, unidentified publication (removed to oversize box 9) |

Oversize Material

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | 1 | William A. Fairburn, personal ephemera (from box 1 folder 11) |
|   | 2 | Clippings, steamships (from box 2 folder 10)                  |
|   | 3 | Index to photographs, unidentified publication (from box 8)   |

Printer's Proofs of *Merchant Sail*

- |    |  |                                |
|----|--|--------------------------------|
| 10 |  | Unbound signatures, Volume 2   |
|    |  | Corrected sheets, Volume 2     |
|    |  | Table of Contents, Volumes 1-3 |
|    |  | Insurance Copy, Volume 1       |
|    |  | Insurance Copy, Volume 2       |
|    |  | Insurance Copy, Volume 3       |
|    |  | Insurance Copy, Volume 4       |
|    |  | Insurance Copy, Volume 5       |